



## **Saving the Original Sinner: How Christians Have Used the Bible's First Man to Oppress, Inspire, and Make Sense of the World**

**Karl W. Giberson**

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*Adam's linchpin role in debates on original sin provides Christians with an ideal framework in which to explore matters of science and truth.*

*Saving the Original Sinner: How Christians Have Used the Bible's First Man to Oppress, Inspire, and Make Sense of the World*, by Karl W. Giberson, examines who the biblical Adam was, who he wasn't, and why it matters.

Was Adam real? That's the simplified central question Giberson examines. The answer influences how Christians read the whole Bible, whether humans blame God or Adam for sin in the world, and how people interpret Jesus's life and death—and their importance. The question of Adam is also part of a broader conversation on Christianity's relationship to science.

Giberson takes a multidisciplinary approach, examining biblical studies, linguistics, history, anthropology, and more. His goal is not to demand that people choose a side, but rather that they not be threatened by science or the Bible, allowing each to shape the understanding of the other. As a result, the book is a good fit for people of a wide variety of beliefs. People on the far ends of the spectrum of science and religion will be the most challenged and discomforted, and may be changed for the better by the book. Some Christians will be surprised to learn that their faith can stand even when they acknowledge validity in science.

While Giberson's keen research and insight provides a lot of light to the topic, his conclusion is honest and acknowledges that there is much left to learn: "We are a troubled species" looking in different places for "some kind of salvation." Giberson doesn't say where to find it, but he does contend that it's not found by tight-fistedly clinging to a particular idea of truth.

Giberson, a professor of science and religion, is an expert in these controversial topics and has written many books on these tricky areas, including *Saving Darwin*. His approach is academic but with some personal content (since belief is inherently personal); for example, he shares how his visit to the Creation Museum highlighted just how much his beliefs had changed since his childhood.

*Saving the Original Sinner* encourages people to let Adam off the hook and, in turn, put themselves and all of humanity in his place.

MELISSA WUSKE (Fall 2015)

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